

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Thomas W. Adams on December 2, 2008.

The application has been amended as follows:

IN THE SPECIFICATION

page 4, line 2, the sentence -- In another embodiment the sulfur-containing compound is a mercapto aliphatic sulfonic acid, an alkali metal salt thereof, or a mixture thereof. -- has been inserted after the word "group."

IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 1, line 5, the word "comprising" has been deleted and replaced with the words -- selected from --.

Claim 1, line 5, the Roman numeral -- (i) -- has been inserted before the word "sulfoalkylated".

Claim 1, line 6, the Roman numeral -- (ii) -- has been inserted after the word

“imines,”.

Claim 1, line 6, the Roman numeral -- (iii) -- has been inserted after the word “and”.

Claim 1, line 6, the word “or” has been deleted and replaced with a -- , -- (comma).

Claim 1, line 7, the words -- , or mixtures thereof -- has been inserted after the word “thereof”.

Claim 6, line 1, the word “electroplating” has been deleted.

Claim 10, line 7, the word “comprising” has been deleted and replaced with the words -- selected from --.

Claim 10, line 7, the Roman numeral -- (i) -- has been inserted before the word “sulfoalkylated”.

Claim 10, line 7, the Roman numeral -- (ii) -- has been inserted after the word “imines,”.

Claim 10, line 8, the Roman numeral -- (iii) -- has been inserted after the word “and”.

Claim 10, line 8, the word “or” has been deleted and replaced with a -- , -- (comma).

Claim 10, line 8, the words -- , or mixtures thereof -- has been inserted after the word “thereof”.

Claim 16, line 1, the word “plating” has been deleted and replaced with the word -
- electroplating --.

Claim 17, line 1, the word “plating” has been deleted and replaced with the word -
- electroplating --.

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

The following is an examiner’s statement of reasons for allowance:

Claims **1-4, 6-9 and 18-19** are allowable over the prior art of record because the prior art does not teach or suggest an aqueous acidic iron phosphorus bath comprising (A) to (C) as present claimed; and a process for electrodepositing an iron-phosphorus alloy on a conductive substrate which comprises the steps of (A) providing and (B)

effecting as presently claimed.

Claims **10-13, 15-17 and 20** are allowable over the prior art of record because the prior art does not teach or suggest an aqueous acidic iron phosphorus electroplating bath comprising (A) to (C) as presently claimed; and a process for electrodepositing an iron-phosphorus alloy on a conductive substrate which comprises the steps of (A) providing and (B) effecting as presently claimed.

The prior art does not contain any language that teaches or suggests the above. *Uchida et al.* does not teach an aqueous acidic iron phosphorus bath comprising a sulfur-containing compound selected from (i) sulfoalkylated polyethylene imines, (ii) sulfonated safranin dye, and (iii) mercapto aliphatic sulfonic acids, alkali metal salts thereof, or mixtures thereof. Therefore, a person skilled in the art would not have been motivated to adopt the above conditions, and a prima facie case of obviousness cannot be established.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to EDNA WONG whose telephone number is (571) 272-1349. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri 7:30 am to 4:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Nam Nguyen can be reached on (571) 272-1342. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Edna Wong/
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1795

EW
December 2, 2008